



## MICROFILES OF HUMAN RELATIONS AREA FILES SOON AVAILABLE

By Frank W. Moore

The Human Relations Area Files is the only system of information retrieval operating in the Social Sciences. This fact was uncovered in a recent survey of the field made by Margaret Egan. (*Information Systems in Documentation, Inter-science Publishers* - 1957)

Headquarters for the Human Relations Area Files is located in New Haven, Connecticut. HRAF was incorporated as a department of Yale University in 1949 and is a direct descendant of the Cross-Cultural Survey founded at Yale in 1937 by Professor George P. Murdock. The Cross-Cultural Survey produced only a single set of Area Files for use at Yale. HRAF was established to produce Files for 16 cooperating universities. The new microfilm version of the Files, now being produced through the cooperation of HRAF and University Microfilms, is designed to increase distribution of this important research tool to still more institutions.

The Area Files are based upon codes contained in two HRAF outlines. The *Outline of World Cultures* is a systematic listing of all societies and cultures, contemporary or extinct, of the entire world. The *Outline of Cultural Materials* is a listing of 707 categories of data covering all aspects of man's culture and environment. For the paper copies of the Area Files distributed to all 16 member Universities, books and articles dealing with a given area are Xeroxed page by page onto multilith masters. These masters are then analyzed by trained researchers who enter category numbers in the margins corresponding to the content of each paragraph or sentence. Each page is then reproduced (by multilith printing) as many times as there are different category numbers on the page. Thus, a page containing information on eight different topics would be reproduced nine times. The ninth copy is for the text category, which is simply a page order copy of the original book or

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## TiLiSpIlFor

## FORTUNE SMILES AND OUR PERIODICAL LIST IS STRENGTHENED

Time is a wonderful and amazing thing. When it is soon enough, it is *in*; when it is punctual, it is *on*; when one serves it, one *does* it; when it (pluralistically speaking) is sporadic, it is *at*. It can be *saved*, *spent* or *wasted*, *borrowed*, *begged* or *given*. It *flies*, and yet it *stands still*. It can be *kept* and *marked*. It has dimension but no one has ever seen it. Its *ravages* are universal, yet it *cures all ills*. When there is too much of it, it *hangs on our hands*; but when there is a dearth of it we wonder *where in the world it has gone*.

We also wonder where in the world we are going to put it. We refer now to the kind of *TIME* that is black and white and read all over; the *TIME* that is both perennial and annual; that is priceless but still has a price; the *TIME* that began on the 3rd of March, 1923; the *TIME* that already fills, in bound volumes, some 35 feet of your precious shelfage; the *TIME* that, growing at the rate of some 6,000 pages a year, relentlessly requires another foot of shelf each per annum. This *TIME* is now about to be put on University Microfilms' microfilm.

But there is more shelf space to be reclaimed, for your 17 feet of *FORTUNE* and your 25 feet of *LIFE* may also, at one and the same time and in the same way, be recovered and rededicated to the aims and aspirations of new tenants. *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, too.

Librarians know, if others do not, that 'God helps those as help their shelves.' As the great Dewy (Melvil, we believe it was) once said: "Sho me a librerryun hu is lacking in shelf-importuness and shelf-esteem and I wil sho u a librerryun hu thinks he can conker space without an Explorer or evn microfilm."

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MICROCOSM is intended to bring interesting news of microfilming in all of its phases to the attention of librarians and others who, in the opinion of the Publisher, will benefit by receiving it.

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## MICROFILES

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article. This text category is supplied to provide context in case the researcher feels that he needs additional orientation beyond the page or pages in the category he is using.

Foreign language sources pertaining to the area file being processed are translated, and both the foreign text and English translation are placed in the file. Translations have been made from Hungarian, Chinese, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Vietnamese, Polish, Italian, Turkish, Estonian, and Finnish.

The researcher using the Files proceeds as follows. The first thing he does is locate his topic in the *Outline of Cultural Materials*. Let's say, for example, he is interested in the clothing worn in Burma. He would locate (through the index) category 291 *Normal Garb*. Next he would look behind the divider numbered 291 in the Burma file. Behind this divider he would find 5 x 8 printed paper slips, duplicates of book pages, containing the information on clothing which he is seeking. To locate the data on clothing available in the literature on over 100 cultures is a matter of only the few minutes work required to look through the other area files. Tedious searching for books and references within books is eliminated. Searching for data on any of the other 706 categories is as simple and quick as the example just given.

There are at present well over 100 files on

different areas and cultures available. About 40 new files on pre-literate peoples are being prepared at present under a Ford Foundation grant.

From a research point of view, the Files are most useful for cross-cultural work. Intensive work can, of course, be done on a single area utilizing the Files. The Files are also used extensively as a teaching aid, for reference, and as a check on previously published work.

To date, many publications and dissertations, as well as thousands of term papers, have been prepared using the Files as a tool. A prominent anthropologist has said, "There is material for thousands of dissertations in the Area Files." With the increased present-day emphasis on graduate degrees, the Files will undoubtedly be used more and more for dissertations and theses.

In the past a majority of the users of the files have been anthropologists, but sociologists and psychologists are making increasing use of them. Nearly 50 different disciplines and sub-disciplines were represented in a recent survey of file use at only eight member universities.

The major drawback to the system is the cost and difficulty of maintaining the Area Files. At present only 16 copies for general use are available in the United States and none overseas. As a result scholars at other schools and institutions have had to make pilgrimages to the member universities to use the Area Files.

Microfilming of the Files for distribution at a much lower cost has long been considered, but only recently, with the advent of unitized microfilm, has this become practical. Now the Files are being filmed at the rate of 100,000 pages per year. The film is cut into 5 inch lengths and inserted into acetate jackets, each holding up to 36 pages of file material. These jackets (3 x 5 for easy storage in conventional file drawers) are identified on a paper strip running along the top edge with the proper category and File numbers. Thus a researcher proceeds exactly as with the regular paper edition, except that he inserts the proper card into a microfilm viewer.

HRAF has produced to date over 1,250,000 file slips for each copy of the Area Files, a total of about 3,000 sources (totaling some 300,000 book pages) having been processed to produce these file slips. For all the 25 paper copies which are printed (16 members, a master set, government agencies and several unassigned sets) HRAF has printed about 50,000,000 file slips in its eight years of existence. At one time, over 30 people (most of whom held at least a master's degree) were on the research staff as analysts.

The job of producing files on a representative sample of world cultures is truly immense in scope. With the cooperation of the member universities, foundations and government agencies, this task will be accomplished in the near future. Subscribers to both the paper edition and the microfilm version will help disseminate the results of this program to the scholars of the world.

Additional information may be had from either University Microfilms or HRAF at Yale. □□

## MICROFILMS FOR SMALLER LIBRARIES

By Robert L. Collison

An American who came to London recently complained bitterly that he had been obliged to visit six different libraries to see all the volumes of a file of one of Britain's more specialised journals. As he went on to describe the formalities and varying hours of opening that have to be observed to use these libraries, he grew more indignant, ending with the exclamation: "Why don't they concentrate the whole file in one place?" A postmortem showed that this would not only have been impossible but also undesirable since two of the libraries were not permitted to dispose of their holdings, so that the complete set would have to be kept by one of them, and neither was open sufficiently long each day to suit the needs of most readers.

The answer is of course microfilm: if the complete file were available on microfilm each of these libraries — and many more throughout the world — would be able to have an unbroken run of this periodical without further ado, and the chances of the information it contains surviving any catastrophe would be immeasurably greater. Such a situation occurs over and over again, but to say that the problem is restricted to such circumstances would be to keep it on too simple a level.

A few weeks ago a group of industrial librarians were asked whether they included the advertisement pages when sending their periodicals for binding. The answers were roughly fifty-fifty. This is a point that union lists do not disclose. Thus, when a library is listed as having a complete run of a journal, does the entry in fact tell the truth? If the advertisements are not included it does not, for, although most readers do not need this part of the periodical, there are some — such as research workers in the social sciences, the trend of prices, development of fashion, etc. — who definitely want either the text or the illustrations in advertisements or, very often, both. To go a step further, the covers of periodicals are often omitted when binding, and yet these too provide some information that may be of value in future research. Any serious student will agree that the ideal state of any periodical is its exact appearance and contents when issued, without the intrusion of the librarian who rightly or wrongly decides that such-and-such material is extraneous. A clear parallel is to be found in indexing where, until the H. W. Wilson Company of New York set a new high standard, the smaller items in journals were often ignored as being unimportant.

Microfilm solves these problems without difficulty, just as it can remedy another nightmare that haunts librarians. An American detective story of the more hard-bitten variety relates how a detective went to a newspaper office and asked for the file of the local paper. Having found the item that interested him, he waited until the clerk

was busy with the switchboard, ripped the page from the volume, carefully closed the book and, thanking the clerk, walked out. The fact that subsequently his flourishing the clipping was sufficient to reduce the villain to confession, would hardly console any librarian who has to contend with this type of everyday selfishness. So far I have been unable to discover any example of a reader's clipping an extract from a microfilm — and, even if he did, the section would be replaceable.

But, while microfilm is obviously the solution to problems of space, mutilation, handling of heavy volumes, high binding costs (not to mention collation, binding delays, and absence of volumes), broken sets, and other daily headaches of libraries, there is another point that I have so far not seen elaborated elsewhere. In common with other librarians I have great delight in reading through the long lists of what is now available on microfilm and in realising that we are on the brink of entering a promised land where no recorded material will be beyond our grasp. In doing so I nevertheless remember that this applies mainly to the larger libraries, to the great research institutions and to the new national foundations. At the back of my mind there is the equally important problem of the smallest libraries. Microfilm has gone some, but not all, of the way to help them too.

At the beginning of this century most large towns in Britain had a library service: practically no rural area had any. Today, every part of the country has a lending library service but the reference libraries are restricted to the towns. Most county librarians have done their best to relieve this situation as far as possible by supplying on loan many books that are normally available for reference only in the average municipal library. But this is not a reference service and, in some of the more populous counties, small reference libraries or sections, have been included in the regional branches, and Middlesex has developed the first of its large regional reference libraries. It is inevitable that however well these reference projects are realised, the older works, the more expensive or larger sets, and the more specialised items will be absent from the great majority of them.

We have already seen that so vast a project as copying the whole of the *S.T.C.* items is not beyond the reach of microfilm and, just as important, there is a sufficient number of purchasers to justify it. Consider, for a moment, what could happen if the whole of the works listed in the current edition of Winchell were available as a set on microfilm — or, being British, if the whole of the three thousand items listed in Dr. Walford's forthcoming guide to reference material were similarly available. This would mean that a complete reference library could be planted in the smallest county branch in Britain and thus make the basic resources of a great city reference library available to a market town population of ten thousand or so. Naturally, books do not alone make a reference library: the staff of



the branch would need some intensive training to enable them to exploit such a tool properly. But the great difficulty of providing a full town service to a country area would largely be solved; and this without obliging the county to build costly extensions to their branches or to employ large numbers of extra staff. In introducing such an adjunct a number of new problems would undoubtedly arise, but none that a capable librarian could not deal with. I even envisage a form of selective analytical index to the books microfilmed that would guide readers straight to the more unexpected features of their contents. Such a development would in fact help Britain to provide, at long last, a standard form of reference library service in line with the postal and banking services on which we have learnt to rely for so long.

The word Britain has perhaps been emphasised too much. What, after all, would have been the effect if such a concentrated reference tool had been included in the Unesco pilot library projects at Delhi and at Medellin, with suitably-trained staff to demonstrate the vast possibilities of the microfilm reference library in countries new to library services?

Once this has been achieved it should be possible to establish a live current reference service with additions and replacements to the basic set in common with the new editions of Winchell and of Walford. We should put within reach of the remotest parts of the earth the resources of Pauly-Wissowa and Kirk-Othmer, of the *Annual register* and Diderot. It is doubtful whether the West could find any other ambassador as effective or influential as this would prove.

Mr. Robert L. Collison, F. L. A., is Reference Librarian, City of Westminster Public Libraries, London.

He has been a librarian in various town, county and other libraries since 1930, including Reference Librarian, United States Information Services, in London, 1947. In 1951-52 he was a Fulbright scholar at the University of California at Los Angeles.

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## POTPOURRI

By Eugene Power

University Microfilms is most fortunate in having the pleasure of announcing in this issue two new projects of importance to librarians.

The Human Relations Area Files are of great and increasing importance to students of the social sciences. The unitized microfilm edition, at a much lower price than the paper edition, will expand the use of the Files by making them more widely available.

We will be glad to send descriptive material concerning the H.R.A.F. on film to all those who inquire further, or this information may be had directly from Frank W. Moore, the author of the H.R.A.F. article on page 1. Inquiries addressed to Mr. Moore should be sent to him at Human Relations Area Files, Box 2054, Yale Station, New Haven, Conn.

## TiLiSpIlFor

*Time*, *Life*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Fortune* are important recent additions to our periodical list, and we anticipate that many librarians will want to have current volumes of these titles. Backfiles will also be filmed and will be available later in the year.

Presently, arrangements are also being made for photographing *House and Home*, and *Architectural Forum*, on the same basis.

These Time, Inc., publications have long been considered for microfilm publication because of the many requests we have received for them from librarians. Microfilm is the only miniature reproduction medium which will faithfully reproduce the halftones which are an integral part of *Life*. Illustrations in color will be reproduced as black and white illustrations on the film.

Donald Geddes is the author of the amusing story on page 1.

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